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Message Text

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15
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 A-01 FBO-02 L-03 H-02 ABF-01

OMB-01 /036 W
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R 040610Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4246
INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

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PASS COPY TO DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY EAGLEBURGER AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY JOHN THOMAS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AFSP, ABLD, PFOR, ABUD
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTRY DISCUSSES MOVE OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO RIYADH

REF: JIDDA 0191

SUMMARY: SAG GIVES OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION THAT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ARE TO MOVE TO RIYADH WITHIN FIVE YEARS. SAG TO DEVEOP DIPLOMATIC ENCLAVE FOR THIS PURPOSE, BUT WILL PERMIT EMBASSIES TO LOCATE ELSEWHERE IN RIYADH SHOULD THEY DESIRE. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNSELOR, MET WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS ON MOVE TO RIYADH (SEE FEFTEL) AT FOREIGN MINISTRY MARCH 31.
2. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS SHEIK IBRAHIM AL-SULTAN INFORMED GROUP THAT ALL DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS WOULD MOVE TO RIYADH WITHIN FIVE YEARS.

3. SAG HAS PURCHASED SIX MILLION SQUARE METERS OF LAND TO BE USED FOR DIPLOMATIC ENCLAVE IN RIYADH. SITE IS ON ROAD TO DARIYA SOUTH OF CAPITAL. INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING
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FIRM WILL BE CONTRACTED TO DESIGN ENCLAVE WHICH WILL

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INCLUDE ANCILLARY SERVICES SUCH AS PHARMACIES, MEDICAL FACILITY, ETC. AREA WILL HAVE TO BE COMPLETED WITH INFRASTRUCTURE TO PROVIDE ELECTRICITY, WATER, SEWERAGE, ROAD NETWORK, PARKS, ETC. IT IS NOW BARREN DESERT.

4. PLOTS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS IN SIZES DESCRIBED AS "SMALL, MEDIUM, AND LARGE." ACTUAL ACREAGE OF PLOTS NOT YET DETERMINED, BUT BASED ON NUMBER OF MISSIONS INVOLVED (ABOUT 80) WE FIGURE AVERAGE SIZE AMOUNTS TO 75,000 SQUARE METERS LESS AMOUNT NEEDED FOR ROADS, PARKS, COMMON USE SERVICE BUILDINGS AND OFFICIES, ETC. (OUR COMPOUND IN JIDDA HAS 175,000 SQUARE METERS.)

5. PLOTS WILL BE SOLD OUTRIGHT (IN CASH OR WITH PAYMENTS SPREAD OUT) TO RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS AT SAG ACQUISITION COST. OFFICIAL WAS UNABLE TO DIVULGE PRICE PER SQUARE METER. LAND WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE TO GOVERNMENTS BASED ON RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT (I.E., PLOTS CAN BE ACQURIED AT NO COST IF SAG IS PROVIDED SIMILAR SIZE OF LAND FOR ITS MISSION IN OTHER COUNTRY ON SAME BAIS). IN REPLY TO INQUIRY FROM ZAIRE AMBASSADOR, WHO ASKED HOW RECIPROCITY WOULD WORK IF SAG HAS NO MISSION IN THE OTHER COUNTRY, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER SAID "HE HOPED SAG WOULD HAVE MISSIONS IN ALL COUNTRIES WITH WHICH IT HAS RELATIONS."

6. OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED THAT FOREIGN MISSIONS WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE OBLIGED TO ESTABLISH THEIR EMBASSIES IN THE DIPLOMATIC ENCLAVE, AND WOULD BE FREE TO MAKE THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS AND ESTABLISH COMPOUNDS OR OFFICES ELSEWHERE IN CAPITAL.

7. OFFICIAL STATED SAG UNDERSTANDS NECESSITY FOR SOME COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY MOSLEM COUNTRIES WITH HAJ PILGRIMS, TO MAINTAIN CONSULAR OFFICES IN JIDDA. HE STATED ISLAMIC CONFERENCE SITE WILL REMAIN IN JIDDA UNLESS CHANGED BY DEREE OF SUMMIT FOREIGN MINISTERS.

8. OFFICIAL SKIRTED QUESTION RAISED BY PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR ON HOW SOON MISSIONS COULD MOVE TO RIYADH, AND WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH LIAISON OR BRANCH OFFICE
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OF EMBASSY IN RIYADH DURIING INTERIM PERIOD BEFORE ENCLAVE IS READY.

9. OTHER POINTS MENTIONED BY OFFICIAL:
A. SAG "WILL FIND SOLUTION" FOR SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN OF DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY.
B. KING KHALID AND CABINET MINISTERS, BUT NOT THEIR STAFFS, WILL CONTINUE TO RESIDE IN TAIF DURING

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SUMMER SEASON.
C. SAG WILL CONSIDER BUILDING LOW RENTAL HOUSING FOR LOCAL STAFFS OF EMBASSIES.

10. AT BEHEST OF SEVERAL AMBASSADORS, OFFICIAL (SOMEWHAT RELUCTANTLY) AGREED TO SEND CIRCULAR NOTE TO ALL MISSIONS GIVING OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF DECISION TO MOVE TO RIYADH. EMBASSY WILL POUCH COPY UPON RECEIPT.

11. MINISTRY WAS ALSO REQUESTED AND SAID IT WOULD SEND MAP OF AREA TO ALL MISSIONS, BUT WE DO NOT EXPECT THIS TO BE SOON FORTHCOMING.

12. COMMENT: WHETHER OR NOT THIS SCHEME IS COMPLETED WITHIN FIVE YEARS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING A NEW MINI-CITY WITHIN A CAPITAL ALREADY STRUGGLING WITH INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE, ARE STAGGERING AND WILL REQUIRE UNPRECEDENTED EFFORTS AND RESOURCES.

13. WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT OPTION MENTIONED PARA SIX ABOVE, WHEREBY MISSIONS ARE FREE TO ESTABLISH COMPOUNDS ELSEWHERE THAN IN DIPLOMATIC ENCLAVE, MAY BE MORE SUITABLE FOR REQUIREMENTS AND OPERATIONS OF U.S. GOVERNMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA. WE SHALL BE ADDRESSING THIS POINT IN FUTURE COMMUNICATIONS, WITH OUR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. IN THE MEANTIME, IT BEHOOVES DEPARTMENT TO APPRISE THE CONGRESS OF THIS IMPENDING MOVE SINCE RESOURCES WE SHALL REQUIRE EXTEND BEYOND THOSE NORMALLY AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EMBASSIES, DIPLOMATIC CORPS, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976JIDDA02421
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760127-0054
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760499/aaaadhcx.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 JIDDA 191
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUN 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

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EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOREIGN MINISTRY DISCUSSES MOVE OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO RIYADH
TAGS: AFSP, ABLD, PFOR, ABUD, US, SA, RIYADH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006